



The Council reelected Ricks Savage as Chairman and Ron Smith as Vice Chairman for next year. Over the past year, Ricks and Ron have strived to ensure that the Council works cooperatively with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the fishing industry in deriving management decisions. They believe there continues to be a great need for fishery management agencies to develop a more trusting and cooperative relationship with industry. "Industry has a wealth of knowledge, information and ideas that could make fisheries management more efficient and effective," Ron said. Ricks and Ron are dedicated and committed to leading the Council in the development of more efficient, effective, and enforceable fishery management plans and methods of fishery management.

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What's Up for 2003?

by Dan Furlong, Executive Director

Here we are again at the start of a new Council year and this occasion always presents an excellent opportunity to forecast where we would like to be this time next year. Perhaps the best way to go about this is to take a look at what we have accomplished during the past year.

During 2002 the Council approved and has submitted for Secretarial approval Amendment 13 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Plan. The principal features in this amendment are the establishment of a coastwide commercial quota system to replace the current quarterly quota system used in the black sea bass fishery, and a "cure" for the essential fish habitat disapprovals that relate to Amendment 12. The Council also completed Amendment 13 to the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP, and

at our first meeting in 2003 it is anticipated that the Council will approve this amendment for submission to the Secretary. Principal features include: revising the overfishing definition for surfclams, "curing" fishing gear impact deficiencies regarding effects on essential fish habitat, adopting a multi-year quota setting mechanism for surfclams and ocean quahogs, and establishing a monitoring system for clamming trip activities. The Council also approved Framework 3 to the Squid, Mackerel and Butterfish FMP that extends the *Illex* squid moratorium through June 30, 2004. This extension should allow adequate time for the Council to develop and approve Amendment 9 to the FMP that would perpetuate this moratorium as well as address a number of other

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2003 Recreational Specifications

Council Establishes Fishery Management Measures

The Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board (Board) met in December to jointly recommend recreational management measures for the 2003 fisheries. The recreational harvest limit was previously set by the Council and Board in August.

The recreational fisheries will be subject to the current 2002 federal regulations until the 2003 management measures are promulgated by the National Marine Fisheries Service Northeast Regional Administrator.

The approved recommendations for the

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Proposed Recreational Fishery Specifications for Year 2003 Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass

	Recreational Harvest Limit	Possession Limit	Minimum Fish Size	Open Seasons
Summer Flounder	9.28 m lbs	state-specific	state-specific	state-specific
Scup	4.01 m lbs	50 fish (EEZ)	10" TL (EEZ)	Jan. 1-Feb. 28; July 1-Nov. 30 (EEZ)
Black Sea Bass	3.43 m lbs	25 fish	12" TL	Jan. 1-Sept. 1; Sept. 16-Nov. 30

THE MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

302-674-2331

www.mafmc.org

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Ricks Savage

Vice Chairman:

Ronal Smith

Executive Director:

Daniel Furlong (ext. 19)

Deputy Director:

Christopher Moore, Ph.D. (ext. 16)

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Public Affairs Officer/Editor:

Marla Trollan (ext. 32)

TECHNICAL STAFF

Fishery Management Specialist/Senior Ecologist

Thomas Hoff, Ph.D. (ext. 15)

Fishery Management Specialist/Biology:

Richard Seagraves (ext. 14)

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Clayton Heaton (ext. 13)

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Fishery Management Specialist/Biology:

Valerie Whalon (ext. 11)

Fishery Management Specialist/Biology/NEPA Coordinator:

Jim Armstrong (ext. 33)

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Joanna Davis (ext. 18)

Financial Assistant:

Kathy Collins (ext. 33)

Recent News

Councils Schedule Surfclam/ Ocean Quahog Public Hearings

September 6, 2002

Last September, the Council conducted three public hearings on Amendment 13 to the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP. The amendment addresses a new surfclam over-fishing definition; fishing gear impacts to essential fish habitat; multi-year quotas; suspension of the surfclam minimum size limit; and a vessel monitoring-type system.

Law Enforcement Invokes Maximum Penalties on Fishermen

September 9, 2002

Fishermen caught and convicted of violating fishery regulations face heavy penalties as demonstrated by a recent law enforcement action. A fisherman from Rhode Island was charged with twenty-nine violations of the rules and regulations governing the sale and handling of summer flounder. He was sentenced to 90 days in jail, 26 months suspended sentence and fined over \$32,000 in restitution for his violations.

Spiny Dogfish Management Measures

October 7, 2002

The Council approved the spiny dogfish management measures for the 2003/2004 fishery during the October Council meeting. In addition to approving the management measures, the Council discussed options to be included in Amendment 1 to the Spiny Dogfish FMP.

Rewards Offered for Return of Black Sea Bass Tags

October 11, 2002

NOAA Fisheries biologists offered rewards for the return of orange and red tags affixed to black sea bass in ocean waters off six East Coast states.

Council and Board Adopt Recreational Management Measures for 2003

December 13, 2002

The Council and Board met in Duck, North Carolina, to recommend recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass to achieve the recreational harvest limits previously adopted by the Council and Board in August.

2003 Meetings

Councils and Commission

JANUARY

21-23

28-30

MEETINGS

MAFMC, Atlantic City, NJ

NEFMC, Portsmouth, NH

FEBRUARY

24-27

ASMFC, TBD

MARCH

3-7

4-6

18-20

SAFMC, Jekyll Island, GA

NEFMC, Providence, RI

MAFMC, Virginia Beach, VA

MAY

6-8

20-22

26-29

MAFMC, New York City, NY

NEFMC, Portsmouth, NH

Council Chairman's, TBD

JUNE

9-12

16-20

24-26

ASMFC, TBD

SAFMC, Cocoa Beach, FL

MAFMC, Philadelphia, PA

JULY

15-17

NEFMC, Portland, ME

AUGUST

5-7

25-28

MAFMC, Baltimore, MD

ASMFC, TBD

SEPTEMBER

15-19

16-18

SAFMC, Pawley's Island, SC

NEFMC, Fairhaven, MA

OCTOBER

7-9

MAFMC, Kill Devil Hills, NC

NOVEMBER

18-20

NEFMC, Gloucester, MA

DECEMBER

2-4

8-12

14-18

MAFMC, Wilmington, DE

SAFMC, Wrightsville Beach, NC

ASMFC, TBD

To be added to our mailing distribution list contact:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Room 2115, Federal Building
300 S. New Street
Dover, DE 19904
302-674-2331
website: <http://www.mafmc.org>
e-mail: mtrollan@mafmc.org

Spiny Dogfish Management Update

Quota Recommendations and Development of Amendment 1



The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils initiated management of spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) in federal waters through the development of the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The dogfish FMP was partially approved in September of 1999 and plan implementation began the spring of 2000. The upcoming fishing year (May 2003 - April 2004), is the fifth year of the management program. The final rule implementing the Spiny Dogfish FMP contained the following measures: (1) a commercial quota; (2) seasonal (semi-annual) allocation of a commercial quota; (3) a prohibition on finning; (4) a framework adjustment process; (5) the establishment of a Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee; (6) annual FMP review; (7) permit and reporting requirements for commercial vessels, operators, and dealers; and (8) other measures regarding sea samplers, foreign fishing, and exempted fishing activities. The spiny dogfish commercial quota would be set annually at a level to assure that the F specified for the appropriate year in the FMP will not be exceeded.

The annual commercial quota is established by the NMFS Northeast Regional

Administrator based on recommendations made by the Councils. The quota is specified for a fishing year that begins on May 1, and is subdivided into two semi-annual periods. The period from May 1-October 31 is allocated 57.9 percent of the annual quota and the period from November 1-April 30 is allocated 42.1 percent of the annual quota.

The quota recommendation is based upon projected stock size estimates for each year, as derived from the latest stock assessment information, coupled with the target fishing mortality rate specified for each year. The FMP currently stipulates a target fishing mortality rate for the upcoming fishing year (FY2003; May 2003 - April 2004) of $F = 0.03$. Therefore, the annual specification of the commercial quota in FY2003 is constrained to a range from zero to a maximum allowed to assure that F does not exceed 0.03. The Spiny Dogfish Monitoring Committee concluded that the quota consistent with $F = 0.03$ in FY2003 is 4,000,000 pounds.

The Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils recommended different commercial quota specifications and trip limits for FY2003. The Mid-Atlantic Council recommended a quota of 4,000,000 pounds and a

trip limit of 600 pounds for quota period 1 and 300 pounds for quota period 2. In contrast, the New England Council recommended a quota of 8,800,000 pounds with a trip limit of 7,000 pounds for quota period 1 and 5,000 pounds for quota period 2. The FMP provides for disagreement between the Councils on management measures for the upcoming fishing year in that the Regional Administrator may select from any option that has not been rejected by both Councils. The Councils quota recommendations were submitted to the Regional Administrator in December 2002 and a proposed rule for FY 2003 management measures will be published by NMFS in early 2003.

In addition to developing quota recommendations, both Councils agreed to develop Amendment 1 to the Spiny Dogfish FMP in 2003. Modifications to current management measures established in the original FMP are being developed to resolve several important spiny dogfish management issues. First, the Councils must identify a biomass rebuilding target because NMFS rejected the biomass rebuilding target recommended in the original Spiny Dogfish FMP.

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What's Up for 2003?

Continued from page 1

management concerns related to the squid, mackerel and butterfish fisheries. The Council also approved Framework 2 to the Monkfish FMP that would, among other things, set optimum yield and catch targets by management area for year five of the FMP's ten year rebuilding plan, and adjust management measures to achieve these targets.

In addition to these actions that modified four of our Council's seven plans, all of our annual specification setting activities were completed for each of our plans that govern 13 species and 14 stocks. Sixteen different sets of management measures and related supporting documents were developed as recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service so that federal regulations could be in place in a timely manner for fishing year 2003. During our

annual specification setting process, for species so authorized, there were research set-asides established that allows for Council-industry-agency cooperation in the pursuit of additional data and research information to support these species.

In 2003, Council approval of Amendment 13 to the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP should be accomplished in January and set a positive tone for the rest of the year. The Council will develop and approve public hearing documents for Amendment 1 to the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan and Amendment 9 to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan. Hearings will be conducted for each of these plan amendments and it is anticipated that the Council will approve both amendments for Secretarial submission before the end of the year. The Council will

also draft an options paper regarding Amendment 2 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan and will work jointly with the New England Fishery Management Council in finalizing Amendment 2 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan. We will also continue our annual specification setting process for all seven management plans and develop a new set of priorities to support our 2005 research set-aside program. It is anticipated the Council will review 2004 research set-aside project proposals prior to specification setting activities and recommend to the Regional Administrator which projects should be awarded quota 2004.

We will continue to work with our sister Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and other federal agencies and our many constituents and public to ensure concerns and values involved in the practice of fisheries management are fairly addressed and considered as the Council moves forward to meet its management responsibilities. ■

Charter Boat and Head Boat Workshops

SeaGrant Sponsors Educational Workshop in Mid-Atlantic Region

by Charlie Petrocci

"And what sport doth yield a more pleasing comfort and less hurt and change than angling with a hooke." Possibly with those words, 17th-century explorer and fisherman Captain John Smith launched the earliest form of sportfishing in America. From these simple beginnings, with the most utilitarian types of equipment, sportfishing along the mid-Atlantic coast has grown into a multi-billion-dollar industry. At the forefront of this economic boom has been the sportfishing charter boat industry.

For over 100 years, charter boats and party, or head, boats have formed the backbone of the sportfishing industry in the mid-Atlantic region. These boats became a crucial link to regional tourism and traditional heritage efforts, and a driving force in economic development for many small coastal communities from North Carolina to New York. Charter boat operators have been guiding, entertaining, and educating generations of anglers. From small waterfront towns like Wachapreague, Virginia, to larger marinas such as those found around New York, charter boats lining their ports continue to visually remind us of our deep cultural roots in sportfishing recreation.

A Resilient Industry

Years ago, anglers wishing to fish for inland bay, coastal, or off-shore species had to go with a hired boat to get in on the action. They offered both the seasonal angler and the veteran fisherman an opportunity to participate in an otherwise rich man's game. That has changed in the last 20 years as increased personal wealth, especially among the middle class, has enabled many people to buy private boats of their own. This has cut deep into the charter boat business yet the industry remains resilient. Over the last few years, rebounding fish stocks and agreeable harvest regulations have translated into a surge in business and positive customer feedback for many charter boats.

Wachapreague, home of the oldest charter boat fleet in Virginia, is testimony to that. Here, 20 or more boats for hire still take anglers out to offshore haunts as they have done for decades. It is here that one can find three generations of captains searching blue water for off-shore giants. Ports like Wachapreague still cast shadows of the Zane Grey and Ernest Hemingway era.

Charter boats cater to a wide variety of anglers of every nationality, race and gender. On board, sportfishermen find common ground in their pursuit of game fishing. Avid angler Herbert Hoover may have summed it up best when he once said, "Fishing is great discipline in the equality of men, because all men are equal before fish."

A Changing Environment

For some waterfront communities, the sportfishing industry—with charter and head boats at its core—has become an economic driver for other tourist-related dollars. Marinas hosting charter boats also bring in "non-consumptive" users such as visitors attracted to weigh-ins, tournaments, and daily dockside activities. Many visitors to waterfront vacation areas feel that active marinas contribute to their overall vacation experience. And no doubt, marina managers and related service businesses feel the same.

Today, the charter boat industry is faced with ever-changing regulations, legal issues, and fluctuating public resources and demand. Understanding that, Sea Grant programs in six states (New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina), in conjunction with the National Association of Charterboat Operators (NACO), have developed a program that seeks to help the industry through a series of progressive workshops. A region-wide charter and head boat survey was conducted to help develop a more effective educational program by gathering information directly from those in the business — charter boat practitioners. Topics solicited for feedback included: federal and state regulations; fishing management; sale of fish; latest Coast Guard regulations; fish handling quality control; accounting; legal issues; insurance; marketing; web page design; and, off-season business development. Over 400 survey responses were completed and returned!

Workshop Series Planned

Open to all charter and head boat owners and captains, the Sea Grant-sponsored workshops will be held in various locations from New York to North Carolina. Topics will include specific business, safety, and fishery resource issues presented by professionals in each respective field.

"This is a great opportunity for charter and head boat operators to learn about current fishery issues, business management ideas, and new safety practices. It's also a chance for boat owners to come together to share business issues and discuss mutual business-related challenges," said Doug Lipton of Maryland Sea Grant.

All workshops in the series are open to charter and head boat operators. Each program will include educational seminars and materials, and lunch. Advance registration is strongly encouraged. For specific information about a workshop near you, contact the appropriate person listed below:

2003 Workshop Series

February 11-12: Chesapeake Conference Center, Chesapeake, Virginia (offshore species); contact: Tom Murray, (804) 684-7190 /

*Registration deadline: January 31, 2003

March 1: Suffolk Community College, Riverhead, New York; contact: Eileen Brennan, (631) 727-3910 / *Registration deadline:

February 14, 2003

March 11: Holiday Inn, Solomons, Maryland; contact: Tom Murray, (804) 684-7190 / *Registration deadline: February 27, 2003

March 13: Harrison's Harbor Watch Restaurant at the Inlet, Ocean City, Maryland; contact: John Ewart, (302) 645-4060 / *Registration deadline: February 27, 2003

March 26: Location yet to be determined, Atlantic City, New Jersey; contact: Jenny McCormick, (732) 872-1302, ext. 10

Successful Management

Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Resources and Fishery

One of the most successful management programs established by this Council, or perhaps any Council, is the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog FMP. The Council initiated the development of an FMP for these two resources at its very first Council meeting in September 1976. NMFS implemented initial management measures in the fall of 1977. Significant attention has shifted to this FMP now that the legislative moratorium on new individual fishing quota (IFQ) programs has expired.

Surfclams and ocean quahogs account for 51% of the total commercial pounds landed and 54% of the ex-vessel value of the species for which the Council has the lead responsibility.

The surfclam resource was significantly overfished prior to federal management. After WWII, the industry began fishing down areas and then moving to areas with higher catch rates. By the early 1970s the industry had moved from the epicenter off of the New Jersey coast, through the Delmarva beds and was then concentrated mainly off of the

Chesapeake Bay. Total landings rose fairly steadily during the 1960s from 20 to nearly 50 million pounds, and reached an all-time high of 96 million pounds in 1974. Landings averaged over 82 million pounds from 1972 through 1975. Catch rates plummeted as areas were depleted and there was a die-off of marine life off the coast of New Jersey due to low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water column in the summer of 1976.

As the result of the decline in landings and concern for the resource, industry requested management by the Council in 1976, and worked closely with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), Rutgers University, and NMFS scientists to collect the data that would support sustainable management approaches. By 1981 the Council was working on a third Amendment to the FMP, and the surfclam resource was being rapidly rebuilt. Unfortunately, the initial management system that limited vessel numbers and the hours they could spend fishing was becoming increasingly restrictive. With initiation of the plan, fishing was restricted to 96 hours

per week for each vessel. By 1985, allowable fishing time was reduced to only 36 hours per vessel per yearly quarter.

Amendment 8 was implemented in September of 1990 and with it, a completely new approach to fishery management in the United States was created. Amendment 8 established an ITQ system that allowed vessel owners to receive allocation percentages of the annual quota based on, among other things, their reported landings during the previous decade. Implementation of the ITQ system allowed the fishing industry to make nearly all day-to-day fishery decisions, while simultaneously preventing overfishing. As a result, the Council no longer had to determine how to regulate the fishery, but could simply specify an annual quota and leave the business decisions to industry.

Overcapitalization can apply not only when a resource is overfished, but also when a resource is healthy. Without the constraints of an effort management system, industry was free to decide how many vessels were required to harvest the annual quota. In 1979 there were 168 permitted surfclam vessels. At the start of ITQ management in 1990, the surfclam fishery numbered 128 vessels. By

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Delaware's New Research Vessel

Delaware Acquires New Survey Vessel

Last summer, the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife acquired a new custom-built fishery research vessel to conduct marine fish and shellfish biological surveys in the Delaware Bay and adjacent waters (from Pennsylvania state line to the Bay entrance). These survey data are critical as an independent check on population trends and are essential for reliable fisheries stock assessments.

"Any successful management program is dependent on the use of updated, accurate biological survey data for tracking the overall condition of the stocks," stated

Council member Rick Cole. "Delaware is fortunate to have a new fisheries research vessel that will help supply this type of information for many years into the future."

The design of the new vessel, constructed of aluminum alloy, provides a large research platform, shallow draft, and increased speed. Because traditional state trawl surveys were conducted within a 75 mile radius in relatively shallow near shore waters, marine architects needed to consider these factors in the design of the new vessel.

The *First State* has a deck length of 62'4" and can accom-



modate a crew of five scientists and their sampling equipment. The aft deck is arranged to facilitate fisheries research activities. A 15-foot boom, which pivots on the ship's centerline, was designed to lift dredges and other bottom sampling equipment from the dock onto the vessel. Three hydraulic winding spools function to deploy and retrieve trawls and dredges. The vessel can be retrofitted in a matter of hours to convert from trawling to bottom dredge sampling.

Reaching a speed of 20 miles per hour, the vessel will enable the division to conduct surveys more efficiently. The draft of the vessel, only 4' 6", allows the crew to measure annual relative abundance densities of juvenile fish and crabs in less than five feet of water. The survey data will continue to be utilized for regional stock assessments. ■



In memory of Maurice "Buddy" Sipple who died tragically on December 24, 2002 while aboard the research vessel, First State, in the Delaware Bay. Buddy was an environmental boat captain for Delaware Fish and Wildlife for over 20 years. He was a well-respected, outstanding employee who devoted his life to the service of Delawareans. He will be greatly missed by the community and his fellow employees.

Spiny Dogfish

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In addition to the lack of an approved rebuilding target, further declines in spiny dogfish stock size since the FMP was adopted make it necessary to amend the current stock-rebuilding schedule. Amendment 1 must include a stock rebuilding schedule that allows rebuilding of the spiny dogfish stock in a time frame consistent with the Sustainable Fisheries Act. Finally, participants in the spiny dogfish fishery have expressed concern that the current management plan inadequately addresses a number of key management issues. Among these issues are: the seasonal and geographic allocation of the quota; discard monitoring and reduction; limited access to the fishery; size limits; research set-asides; specification schedule; and, interactions between the U.S. and Canadian fisheries.

Amendment 1 development will begin with two scoping hearings to be held in conjunction with the January 2003 meetings of the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils. The Councils have requested that the public offer suggestions concerning the issues and information that should be considered in developing Amendment 1. The Councils will

then prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed amendment in order to address potential impacts of the management alternatives on both the physical and human environment. Once it has been prepared, the public will be invited to comment on any aspect of the DEIS, including the range of alternatives under consideration and the analysis of potential impacts. Development of the Amendment will proceed throughout 2003 with public hearings tentatively scheduled for the early fall and submission to the Secretary of Commerce expected in early 2004.



Council Recognition Program

The Council is currently accepting nominations for the 2003 Fishery Achievement Award for those individuals and organizations in the mid-Atlantic region who have demonstrated professionalism, diligence, and effort to protect the living marine resources through partnership, public education and enforcement actions.

"Activities or achievements of nominees will be open-ended in consideration of the Award for 2003. They can be from the past couple of months, the past couple of years, or from a lifetime of doing the right thing for our fisheries," said Ed Mesunas, chair of the Council's Law Enforcement Committee.



"We also encourage nominees not selected from previous years to resubmit their nominations...this could be their year."

Every year the Council selects a recipient of the Award for his or her commitment to the conservation and protection of mid-Atlantic fisheries. This will be the third year the Award will be presented. Past recipients of the Award have included Coast Guard personnel and commercial fishermen. This year, the Council will present the 2003 Award during the December Council meeting in Wilmington, DE.

Filling out nominations is now easier than ever. You can access an electronic form via the Council's website at: www.mafmc.org or you may also contact the Council office at 302-674-2331 for more information.

Nominations will be accepted from any federal, state, and local community agency as well as non-governmental organizations, groups, associations and private citizens. Deadline for 2003 nominations is July 31, 2003. ■

Surfclam

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1992, the fleet had consolidated to 59 vessels. By 2001 there were only 35 vessels landing surfclams. The industry capital in this fishery is now used much more efficiently, as the "average boat" went from making 34 trips per year in 1990, to 56 trips in 1992, and 68 trips in 2001. Individual surfclam vessels have greatly increased their production, and thus the economic health of individual vessels remaining in the fishery has greatly improved. In 1990 the average annual catch of a surfclam vessel was approximately 24,000 bushels. This amount doubled by 1992, and in 2001 was over 81,000 bushels. All this fleet and capital consolidation occurred without any federal buy-backs of fishing vessels.

ITQ management in this fishery has been successful for a number of reasons. First, Council prevented overfishing with the initiation of ITQ management. There was extensive Council/industry/NMFS cooperation. The industry was generally vertically integrated and had a limited fishery. The industry provided excellent data through logbooks. NMFS devoted sufficient scientific efforts towards the resource. Finally, there is minimal bycatch discard in the fishery, and adverse effects on essential fish habitat (EFH) are negligible.

Dr. William Hogarth, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries with NOAA, in his 2002 Congressional testimony regarding ITQs stated that: "All in all, the surfclam/ocean quahog IFQ has generated significant improvements in economic efficiency and more rational levels of harvesting capacity. The number of vessels in these fisheries has declined sharply, average harvests per vessel have more than tripled, the wasteful derby fishery has ended, and profits per participant have increased considerably."

Under the Council's management for the past 25 years, the surfclam resource has rebuilt, and neither the surfclam nor the ocean quahog is considered overfished. The Mid-Atlantic Council takes great pride in the flexibility and efficiency that the surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ management plan offers to industry, and congratulates NMFS and the industry on operating such a successful management system. ■



Trawl Warp Miscalibration and MAFMC Stocks

Letter from John Boreman to Council Chairman Ricks Savage

The following is an excerpt from a letter to Ricks Savage from John Boreman:

As we've discussed, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center owes you a report on the impact of the *Albatross IV* trawl warp miscalibration on assessments of stocks managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council. VADM Lautenbacher, in a September 16, 2002 memorandum, indicated that "NOAA Fisheries will take action to review the data from any surveys that may have been completed with potentially out of calibration trawl cables, adjust as necessary, and rework all affected assessments." VADM Lautenbacher also promised that the results of such studies should be "made available to affected fishery management councils as soon as possible, but in any case within 60 days."

This letter is intended to outline the steps we will take to provide the appropriate information to the MAFMC in as timely a fashion as possible.

We suggest two different approaches, each involving a separate timeline. The first would be to conduct and report on an exercise somewhat similar to what was done under the auspices of the Groundfish Assessment Review Meeting (GARM). Recall that the GARM was primarily designed to update 20 groundfish assessments (through the year 2001) so as to provide current stock status advice relative to rebuilding strategies for New England groundfish. The discovery of mismarked trawl warps in early September led to a broadening of the remit to the GARM, specifically, to the addition of sensitivity and intervention analyses.

Sensitivity of the assessment results was examined by arbitrarily increasing survey catchability (i.e., the survey indices themselves) by 10%, 25%, and 100% and rerunning the assessments. As you know, the resulting sensitivity of final year estimates of stock status depends on the type of assessment (analytical or index-based), and how the survey data or index are used to calculate stock status. Such analyses have to be done stock-by-stock, as assessment methodologies, as well as approaches to determining TACs, vary.

The situation for the MAFMC-managed stocks differs from that existing for groundfish. In particular, it is not necessary to reassess stocks for 2002, as assessments are either current or not relevant to the 2003 specifications process. Thus, we suggest a sensitivity analysis of the existing assessments and/or protocols used in establishing 2003 TALs.

These sets of analyses demonstrate only sensitivity of results to potential bias in survey indices. The second set of experiments involves looking for evidence of bias in the affected trawl survey results by comparing the series of affected tows (8 surveys; winter 2000 through spring 2002) with comparable data, pre-warp offset, or with data collected by others during the same period as the warp offset. Again using the GARM as a model, a number of different analyses could examine the question of comparability between pre- and post-warp series and between contemporaneous surveys conducted by other vessels. Relative to MAFMC assessments we would suggest the following candidate intervention analyses: Gear damage over time, trawl geometry by depth, patterns in mean/variance by stock, depth at capture, directional changes in abundance indices, Albatross/Delaware comparative fishing power cruises, and contemporaneous survey comparisons.

The work related to assessment sensitivity and intervention analysis can be initiated early in 2003. Given our existing commitment to peer review of the groundfish reference points, GARM results, and October 2002 side-by-side gear studies, we would anticipate commencing the new work as that process ends, say, the beginning of March. We contemplate that a working group could complete the work in about a month and that another month would be needed to produce and finalize a report of the results. This implies delivery of a report to the Council sometime in May 2002.

If, however, we are to determine whether or not an adjustment in the survey data is warranted and, if an adjustment is necessary, the magnitude of the correction, significant additional work will be necessary. Here, we would suggest experiments similar to those conducted in the New England region in October using the *Albatross IV* and the commercial vessel the *Sea Breeze II*. As you know, the essential concept of the October survey field work was that the survey vessel would alternately tow a properly rigged net and an improperly rigged net which also had mismatched trawl warp lengths. A valuable addition to the survey design was the use of commercial vessel towing alongside the *Albatross IV* so that data from that vessel could be used to account for day-to-day/tow-to-tow differences in availability that could confound comparisons.

The *Albatross IV* has entered a major repair period that extends until May 2003; thus, any such work would have to be conducted on the *Delaware II*, with or without the co-participation of a commercial vessel. The *Delaware II* is fully subscribed for the remainder of the year so the ability to schedule a new survey is quite limited.

A more effective approach would be leasing paired commercial vessels to participate in a warp-comparison experiment targeting mid-Atlantic species. Ideally this work could take place in early spring so as to have results available in an April-May time frame. There needs to be an opportunity for peer review of this work as well. Perhaps that could take the form of a 'refereed review' where the report could be mailed to a few experts for review and comment.

Please let us know if this basic approach will work for the Council. If so, we need to discuss and decide on many details. For example what assessments should be examined for sensitivity? What intervention analyses would be the most appropriate for the mix of species taken in Mid-Atlantic fisheries? What are the critical deadlines that the Council faces in incorporating the results of this work?

In the longer run, as we suggested to the Council's Executive Committee (and the NEFMC's Executive Committee), it is important that we form a 'survey methods' advisory committee as soon as possible. Such a committee could be immediately put to work on this problem. For example, they could be asked to provide advice on how the paired trawl work should be conducted, analyzed, reviewed, and reported.

2003 Recreational Specifications

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2003 summer flounder fishery includes a conservation equivalency management system. This system was used in 2002 and will be implemented again in 2003 assuming NMFS adopts the measures as approved. Under this system the states are required to develop management proposals and submit them to the Board for approval. The management proposals will identify the state-specific management measures, i.e., possession limits, size limits, and seasons needed to achieve the state-specific harvest limits. Recreational vessels fishing in federal waters would be subject to the recreational fishery management measures established by the state in which they fish.

The recreational management system for scup in 2003 as approved by the Council and Board includes coastwide management mea-

sures in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore) and separate management measures for states in their respective jurisdictions (shore to 3 miles). In other words, the fishery will be managed in state waters under a conservation equivalency system similar to that for summer flounder. States from New Jersey south will have the same management measures for 2003 with the exception that the state of New Jersey may extend its season through December 31, 2003.

The recreational regulations for black sea bass are less complicated because there is a single set of coastwide management measures that apply to both federal and state jurisdictions. These measures include a 25 fish possession limit, 12 inch minimum fish size, and an open season from January 1-September 1

and September 16-November 30.

Fishermen should check with their state agencies prior to fishing for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass. Following is a list of phone numbers for the state fishery agencies in the mid-Atlantic region:

New York	631-444-0435
Pennsylvania	717-705-7861
New Jersey	609-292-2083
Maryland	800-688-FINS
Delaware	302-739-3498
Virginia	804-367-9369
North Carolina	252-726-7021

For more information regarding state regulations, contact the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission at 202-284-6400. To obtain the federal regulations and/or proposed management measures, contact the Council office at 302-674-2331 or visit the Council's website at: www.mafmc.org. The Council will distribute the 2003 proposed and final federal commercial and recreational regulations this spring. ■



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Room 2115, Federal Building
300 South New Street
Dover, DE 19904-6790

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WILMINGTON, DE